AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ A furnace (22) for heating a preform (10), ~~especially a plastic container preform,~~ which comprises:

a longitudinal heating tunnel (24) bounded transversely by [[the]] mutually parallel longitudinal vertical internal faces (36, 38) of two walls (40, 42), one a heating wall (40), being equipped with a heating system (46), and the other an aerated wall (42), having aeration orifices (50), and in ~~that are intended to let the air blown by a blower (52) pass through them transversely from the upstream, outside~~ the heating tunnel (24), ~~to the downstream, inside the latter, and in which furnace~~ a first portion (12, 14) of the preform (10) is heated ~~in the heating tunnel (24)~~, while a second portion (16) of the preform (10) is held outside the heating tunnel (24) through a longitudinal opening (41) made between [[the]] longitudinal edges of the walls ~~(36, 38)~~ (40, 42) of the heating tunnel (24);[[,]]

a first fan (54a) that delivers a first air stream transversely in a first delivery duct (60a) from an

upstream, outside the heating tunnel (24), to a downstream, inside the latter, in a direction of the first portion (12, 14) of the preform (10), by passing through the aerated wall (42);

a second fan (54b) that delivers a second air stream transversely which is parallel to the first air stream, in a second delivery duct (60b) from the upstream, outside the heating tunnel (24), to the downstream, directly to the second portion (16) of the preform (10), so as to keep the constituent material of this second portion (16) of the preform (10) at a temperature below its softening point; and

the two separate air delivery ducts (60a, 60b) being adjacent and formed by the upper and lower compartments of a common box (66) having a dividing partition (68).

~~the blower (52) comprising two independent fans (54a, 54b) that deliver air transversely to the aerated wall (42) and to the second portion (16) of the preform (10) respectively, so as to keep the constituent material of this second portion (16) of the preform (10) at a temperature below its softening point;~~

~~characterized in that the blower (52) includes two separate air delivery ducts (60a, 60b) that are adjacent and each associated with a fan (54a, 54b)~~.

2. (canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ The furnace (22) according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the blower (52) includes two separate air inlet ducts (58a, 58b) that are each associated with [[a]] the fan (54a, 54b).

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ The furnace (22) according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the blower (52) includes two coaxial vertical shafts (64a, 64b), each driving [[an]] the associated fan (54a, 54b).

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ The furnace (22) according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the speed of the air stream expelled by the fan (54a) associated with the aerated wall (42) is controlled by a control device.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ The furnace (22) according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the fans (54a, 54b) are controlled by two separate control units.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Furnace~~ The furnace (22) according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the blower (52) includes two separate air inlet ducts (58a, 58b) that are each associated with a fan (54a, 54b).

8. (New) The furnace (22) according to claim 1, wherein the preform (10) has a test tube shape and includes a neck that forms a throat.

9. (New) The furnace (22) according to claim 1, wherein the preform (10) is formed from plastic.

10. (New) The furnace (22) according to claim 9, wherein the plastic is polyethylene terephthalate.

11. (new) The furnace (22) according to claim 1, wherein the heating system (46) comprises a plurality of infrared lamps.

12. (new) The furnace (22) according to claim 1, wherein the heating system (46) comprises eight infrared lamps set in the longitudinal vertical internal face (36), each infrared lamp having a longitudinal shape.

13. (new) The furnace (22) according to claim 1, wherein the first fan (54a) and the second fan (54b) are symmetrical about a horizontal mid-plane, and both the first fan (54a) and the second fan (54b) rotate about a vertical axis.